

Descartes', Spinoza's, and Leibniz's Response to the Mind-Body Problem Essay

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Since Descartes many philosophers have discussed the problem of interaction between the mind and body. Philosophers have given rise to a variety of different answers to this question all with their own merits and flaws. These answers vary quite a lot. There is the idea of total separation between mind and body, championed by Descartes, which has come to be known as “Cartesian Dualism”. This, of course, gave rise to one of the many major responses to the [mind](#)-body problem which is the exact opposite of dualism; monism. Monism is the idea that mind and body one and the same thing and therefore have no need for interaction. Another major response to the problem is that given by Leibniz, more commonly known as pre-ordained harmony or monadology. Pre-ordained harmony simply states that everything that happens, happens because God ordained it to. Given the wide array of responses to the mind-body problem I will only cover those given by Descartes, Spinoza, and Leibniz. I will also strive to show how each of these philosophers discuss what mind and body are and how each accounts for God’s influence on the interaction of mind and body, as this is an interesting distinction between them, as well as the important question of the role of substance. This is important, I believe, because it helps to understand the dialogue between the three philosophers.

Descartes is a very well-known philosopher and has influenced much of modern [philosophy](#). He is also commonly held as the father of the mind-body problem, thus any paper covering the major answers of the problem would not be complete without covering his argument. It is in Descartes' most famous work, Meditations, that he gives his view for dualism. Descartes holds that mind and body are com...

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...d and body as one substance together, rather than separate.

The arguments are vast and wide spread. There are still many other philosophers out there who have weighed in on this problem who were not able to be covered in this paper. As you can now clearly see each of these three philosophers had a discourse between one another through their own works in which they tried to reconcile the issues that arose in the others. Interestingly all of these philosophers used God in quite different ways in order to make their argument fit their needs. They also all addressed the idea of substances in different ways, taking it to mean different things. Thus in conclusion neither Descartes, Spinoza, nor Leibniz have arguments that I agree on. Each one has its strong points and its weak points. By tweaking each argument I made them better fit my own understanding and beliefs.

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